

Obtaining Your License

If you are a Massachusetts resident (or even a non-resident), you must have a valid driver's license to operate a motor vehicle on any public road, highway, or other way permitting access to the public.

Through the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issues five license classes with various privileges and restrictions to residents of Massachusetts. Class A, B, and C licenses, which are known as commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), allow you to operate large vehicles, like trucks and buses. The Class D license, which is most common, is for passenger vehicles, vans, and small trucks. The Class M license allows you to operate motorcycles.

CHAPTER 1

License Descriptions and Classifications

This chapter contains licensing rules and procedures for **Class D** (passenger) and **Class M** (motorcycle drivers). The table below summarizes Massachusetts license types.

A Double/Triple Trailer endorsement can only be added to a Class A license.

Endorsements for Class A, B, and C licenses include Combination, Doubles and Triples, Tank Vehicles, HAZMAT, Tank Vehicles with HAZMAT, Passenger Transport Vehicles, and School Bus

Unless otherwise exempted by Federal Regulations, any operator of a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) weighing more than 10,000 lbs., must have in his or her possession a valid U.S. Department of Transportation Medical Card or a valid Medical Waiver Card issued by the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles.

Massachusetts Driver's Licenses	
License Class	Vehicles Permitted
A	Any combination of vehicles with a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds provided the GVWR of the vehicle(s) being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds. (Holders of a Class A license may, with any appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles within Classes B, C, and D.)
B	Any single vehicle with a GVWR of 26,001 or more pounds, or any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds GVWR. (Holders of a Class B license may, with any appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles within Classes B, C, and D.)
C	Any single vehicle, or combination of vehicles, that does not meet the definition of Class A or Class B, but is either designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver, or is placarded for hazardous materials. (Holders of a Class C license may, with any appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles within Classes C and D.)
D	Any single passenger vehicle or combination, except a semi-trailer unit, truck-trailer combination, tractor, or truck with a registered gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) over 26,000 lbs., bus or school bus.
M	A motorcycle or any motor vehicle with a seat or saddle for the rider that is designed to travel with no more than three wheels contacting the ground.

A Massachusetts driver's license is valid for a maximum of 5 years and expires on your birthday. However, your 1st license will expire on your 5th birthday following the date of issue. In the Commonwealth, your driver's license is considered a primary form of identification (ID),

showing proof of identity, residence, age, and signature. For nondrivers who would like similar identification, the RMV issues **Massachusetts IDs** and **Liquor IDs** (see *Appendix B* for more information).

The Photo-Image License/ID

In addition to listing your personal information, a license or an ID issued to you by the RMV features an image of your photo and signature, which is stored on the RMV's central computer. This photo-image technology not only helps make your license or ID tamper resistant, it allows the RMV to issue replacements quickly.

You must obtain a Learner's Permit before you can apply for any license. (This manual specifically outlines the procedures for obtaining a Class D or a Class M license.)



Facial Image Policy

All applicants for a Learner's Permit, Driver's License, Identification Card, Liquor Identification Card, or HP Placard must have their photoimage captured by the RMV.

This is to ensure that the image contained on the issued document and in the RMV's database is the actual image of the person who provided the identification information to the RMV when applying for the document. It is also to aid law enforcement officers in the proper identification of the person whose image is contained on the document.

The captured image must be a straightforward looking view of the applicant. All of the applicant's facial features must be visible, e.g. eyes, nose, mouth, cheeks, etc. The appearance must provide a clear view of the applicant's face as a whole. A solid or transparent facial cover (scarf, veil, dark sunglasses, goggles, surgical or dusk mask, etc.) is not acceptable, but lightly-tinted glasses, reading glasses and prescription glasses (other than dark sunglasses) are allowed if the applicant normally wears them. A hat or other head cover is not acceptable, but if worn for medical or religious reasons, it may be allowed if it does not hide any facial features. Natural facial hair and hairpieces may be acceptable unless the overall effect disguises the person's true facial appearance or facial features are obscured. Permanent facial tatoos are acceptable but temporary tatoos are not.

Endorsements and Restrictions

Endorsements are additional driving privileges that can be attached to your basic license class. All endorsements concern commercial vehicles. For example, you may add a Passenger endorsement to a Class B license.

Restrictions are limitations placed on your driving privileges. Refer to the Driving Restrictions section for more information.

For more information on commercial licenses (CDL), refer to the *Massachusetts Commercial Driver's License Manual*, and *Model 2004 Commercial Driver's Manual Section 10 School Buses*, which are available at any RMV Branch.

School Pupil Transport (8 or fewer passengers)

If you transport school-aged children, you must have a separate license or special endorsement. A pamphlet on school pupil transport license information is available at RMV Branches.

School Bus (9 or more passengers)

To operate a school bus in Massachusetts, you need to have a Commercial Driver's License

with a Passenger (P) endorsement and a School Bus (S) endorsement.

You also need to obtain a School Bus Certificate, which is issued by the Department of Telecommunications and Energy (DTE). To get this certificate, you need to take a school bus road test, which is conducted by DTE. For more information contact DTE at 617-305-3559

Driving Restrictions

Your driver's license may be issued with various restrictions. These restrictions are indicated by code letters on the front and back of your license.



Medical Restrictions

The RMV's Medical Affairs Branch (MAB), which reviews license applications listing physical or mental conditions that may affect a driver's abilities, may issue driving restrictions related to your current medical condition. For example, if you pass the driver's license vision test by wearing glasses or contact lenses, your driver's license will be issued with a "Corrective Lenses" restriction (code letter **B**) and you must wear your corrective lenses when you drive. If you need a mechanical aid or prosthetic device (adaptive equipment) to operate a motor vehicle, the Medical Affairs Branch will issue your license with restriction(s). The Medical Affairs Branch considers license applications on a case-by-case basis, and you may be required to provide a physician's letter for medical clearances or special driving-related equipment.

If the Medical Affairs Branch issues you a separate Restriction Card, your license will display the restriction code letter **J**. With this

The back of your driver's license lists your license class and any endorsements or restrictions.

If you develop a medical condition that affects your ability to drive, you *must* report the condition to the RMV. Please call the Medical Affairs Branch (MAB) at 617 351-9222.

restriction, you must carry your card *and* your license when you drive.

Restrictions are limitations placed on your driving privileges. The RMV may apply any of the following restrictions to a passenger vehicle license: (Commercial vehicle restrictions are not shown)

Driving Restrictions:

- B** Corrective lenses
- C** Mechanical Aid
- D** Prosthetic Aid
- E** Automatic Transmission
- F** Outside Mirror
- G** Limit to Daytime Only
- H** Limit to Restricted Hours
- I** Limit - Junior Operator
- J** Restriction Card Must be Carried
- R** Bioptic telescopic lens
- Y** Restrict to 14 passengers or less

Junior Operator Restrictions

The Junior Operator restriction (code letter I) is added to the licenses of all operators under age 18. A licensed Massachusetts driver between ages 16½ and 18 may *not* drive a motor vehicle between 12:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

Operating a Moped

Under Massachusetts law, mopeds fall into the category of “motorized bicycles” (with or without pedals) and are therefore regulated by driver’s license rules. You must have a valid driver’s license or learner’s permit to operate a moped. Mopeds must have automatic transmissions and cylinder capacities of no more than 50 cubic centimeters. In addition, mopeds must meet all federal safety standards and have maximum speeds of no more than 30 mph. The following limitations apply:

To comply with state law, a rider and any passenger must wear a helmet that meets or exceeds US DOT standards.

- You may *not* drive at a speed greater than 25 mph.
- You may *not* ride on limited-access or express state highways where specific prohibitions against bicycles are posted.
- You must use the proper hand signals before stopping or turning.
- While you may use bicycle lanes along roadways, you may *not* ride on off-street recreational paths.
- You and any passenger must wear helmets that meet or exceed the US DOT standard.
- You may *not* carry a passenger if you are operating on a permit.

Operating a Motorized Scooter

A motorized scooter is **not** a motorcycle, motorized bicycle (moped), or three-wheeled motorized wheelchair. Under Massachusetts law, a “motorized scooter” is defined as any **two-wheeled tandem or three-wheeled** device that meets all of the following:

- 1) Has handlebars
- 2) Is designed to be stood or sat upon by the operator
- 3) Is powered by an electric or gas powered motor that is capable of propelling the device with or without human propulsion
- 4) Is equipped with operational “stop” and “turn signals
- 5) Complies with all applicable Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards

The Registrar has determined that “mini-motorcycles” and “pocket bikes” are “Motorized Scooters”

Motorized scooters do not have to be registered in Massachusetts. However, Motorized Scooters are considered “motor vehicles” under Massachusetts law. You must have a valid driver’s license or learner’s permit to operate a motorized scooter, and can be issued citations for violation of motor vehicle laws.

The following limitations apply when operating a motorized scooter:

- You must wear a helmet that meets or exceeds the US DOT standard.
- You may *not* drive at a speed greater than twenty miles per hour (20 m.p.h.).
- Motorized Scooters may be operated on all public ways (except limited access or express state highways where signs prohibiting bicycles **or** scooters have been posted).
- You are subject to all state traffic laws and regulations, except that the operator **must** keep to the right side of the road **at all times**, including when passing a motor vehicle which is moving in the travel lane of the way.
- You must signal when stopping or turning
- Motorized Scooters may not be operated upon any way after sunset or before sunrise.
- You may not carry a passenger on a Motorized Scooter.

Any violation is subject to a fine of up to \$25 (1st Offense); \$25-\$50 (2nd Offense); \$50-\$100 (3rd + Offense).

Rules for Visitors and Other Nonresidents

A U.S. resident living outside Massachusetts may drive in the Commonwealth using a valid out-of-state driver's license. This rule applies both to visitors and to out-of-state residents who work in Massachusetts.

No person under the age of 16 may drive in Massachusetts. This is true even if you have a driver's license (or learner's permit) issued in a state or U.S. territory or another country that allows operation of a motor vehicle by a person less than 16 years of age.

If you are a visitor from another country, you may drive private passenger vehicles in Massachusetts for **up to 1 year from your date of arriving in the United States** provided you have a valid driver's license issued by your home coun-

try and your country is recognized under one of the conventions listed in Appendix C or the Registrar has specifically granted driving privileges to residents of your country as detailed in *Appendix C*. An International Driver's Permit is not required, but it may help provide an English translation of your foreign license.

You must have your valid out-of-state or foreign driver's license in your possession when driving in Massachusetts.

Once you have established residence in Massachusetts, you must obtain a Massachusetts driver's license to retain your driving privileges. For the procedure for converting your out-of-state or foreign license, see the *Policies for New Residents* section.

Massachusetts Driver's License Limited to Residents

If your privilege to drive on your valid foreign license has expired because more than one year has elapsed since your last date of arrival in this country, or if you are visiting for business or pleasure and are trying to acquire your first driver's license, your ability to obtain a Massachusetts driver's license is limited. Massachusetts law does not authorize driver licenses to be issued for the convenience of business persons or tourists from other countries. To obtain a license you must meet all the requirements for a driver's license under the law, including the requirement that you be a resident of Massachusetts.

Massachusetts law requires those convicted of sex offenses to register with their local police departments. For more information, call 1-800-93-MEGAN.

Applying for a License

Anyone who is at least 16 years old and has not had a driver's license or the right to operate revoked may apply to begin the process of obtaining a Class D or Class M License at any full-service RMV Branch (*see Appendix F for a list of locations*).

You must obtain a learner's permit before you can apply for any license. (This manual specifi-

RMV Phone Center
617-351-4500
in the 339/617/781/857
area codes

1-800-858-3926
from all other MA
area codes

Monday–Friday
9 a.m.–5 p.m.

Internet Address
www.mass.gov/rmv

cally outlines the procedures for obtaining a Class D or a Class M license). To get a learner's permit, you must complete an application, present identification, pay a fee, pass a vision exam, and pass a written test. Your learner's permit does not become a license until you pass the road test and have paid all license fees. If your learner's permit expires, you must take the written test and pay the required fees.

Currently, you can opt to pay the written test, road test, and license fees when you take the written exam. If you choose not to pay all the fees at that time, you can pay the remaining fees when you book your road test. If you are a new Massachusetts resident and have an out-of-state driver's license, you may be eligible to convert your license without testing. For information on license conversion and foreign license policies, see the *Policies for New Residents*.

License Fees

The written test **\$30.00**

The learner's permit written test fee covers the cost of processing your application and administering your written exam. If you fail the written exam or your permit expires, you will be charged this fee again for another examination.

Road test fee **\$20.00**

The RMV charges a flat fee for any license application. This fee covers the cost of processing your application and scheduling a road test. If you fail the road test, do not appear for the road test, are rejected by the examiner, or cancel your appointment with less than 24 hours notice, you will still be charged the \$20 fee. For more details on road testing and fees, see the *Taking the Road Test* section later in this chapter.

License issue fee Class D **\$40.00**

License issue fee Class M **\$40.00**

The RMV charges a driver's license fee so it can issue a tamper-resistant, Class D or Class M license that features your photo-image, your signature, and a magnetic code stripe and/or bar code.

Amending an existing license \$15.00

The RMV charges a fee when you add or change a restriction. Any other change that results in the reissuance of a license will be charged a duplicate license fee of \$20.

Out-of-state conversion fees

Class A* **\$110.00**

Class B* **\$100.00**

Class C* **\$90.00**

Class D* **\$90.00**

**To add motorcycle privileges (Class M) to any of these license classes, you must pay an additional \$15.00.*

Class M only **\$90.00**

Class D or M permit conversion **\$30.00**

Fees are subject to change.

If your license has been revoked in Massachusetts or any other state, you may need to meet additional license application requirements. For details, see *Chapter 2*, which covers license suspensions and revocations.

Graduated Licensing/ Junior Operator Law

The law has several requirements and restrictions that significantly affect the operation of a motor vehicle by a person who has a JOL. The basic purpose of the law is to provide new drivers supervised opportunities in which to develop good driving skills, while keeping those drivers free of the possible distractions caused by friends under age 18 who are present while the drivers are behind the wheel.

An applicant for a driver's license between ages 16½ and 18 must comply with several requirements to obtain a Junior Operator's License (JOL):

- Have a valid learner's permit for at least 6 consecutive months before taking the road test (Any suspension will invalidate the permit and the 6 months will start to run anew when the suspension is lifted.)

- Maintain a clean driving record for at least 6 consecutive months before taking the road test
- Successfully complete a Registrar-approved driver education and training program, which includes 30 hours of classroom instruction; 6 hours of in-car, behind-the-wheel training; and 6 hours of in-car experience observing other student drivers
- Complete at least an additional 12 hours of supervised, behind-the-wheel driving as shown by a certified statement provided by a parent or guardian
- You may not operate a motor vehicle within the first 6 months of receiving a JOL while any passenger **under age 18** is in the vehicle (other than you or an immediate family member of any age) unless you are accompanied by a person who is at least 21 years old, has at least 1 year of driving experience, holds a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or another state, and is occupying a seat beside you. **A Junior Operator who violates the passenger restriction shall be subject to a license suspension of 30 days for a first offense, 60 days for a second offense, and 90 days for a third or subsequent offense.**

The 6-month passenger restriction period will stop running when a suspension begins; the remainder of the restriction period will start running again when the suspension is completed.

- As the holder of a JOL (or a learner's permit), you may not operate a motor vehicle between 12:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless accompanied by your parent or your legal guardian.
- You may not operate a motor vehicle requiring a **commercial driver's license (CDL)**.

Age Requirements

- To apply for a Class D (passenger vehicle) or a Class M (motorcycle) **learner's permit**, you must be at least 16.
- You can obtain a learner's permit at age 16, but you may not receive a Class D or a Class M **driver's license** until you are at least 16½ and have had your permit in good standing for 6 consecutive months and have completed a driver education training program approved by the Registrar.

Parental Consent

All customers applying for permits, licenses, or identification cards who are under age 18 (minors) must obtain written consent from a parent, a legal guardian, a Department of Social Services (DSS) social worker, or a boarding school headmaster. For a learner's permit, or identification card, a person gives written consent by signing the front of the permit / ID application.

If the person signing the front of the application is not a parent, documentation of the person's guardian status must be shown at the time of the written test and road test. Forging a signature may result in license suspension or revocation.

Exceptions to the parental consent requirement are granted to customers under age 18 who can produce valid marriage certificates or legal emancipation documents.

The RMV maintains very strict policies on acceptable forms of identification. See Appendix A for a complete list of acceptable forms.

Identification Requirements

If you apply for a learner's permit/ID and are **17 years of age or under**, you must present the following documents:

- SSN card or valid, current U.S. or non-U.S. passport
- One primary document proving date of birth

Also, parent/guardian's consent (signature) is required on the application.

If you are **18 years of age or older**, you must present the following documents:

- SSN card or valid, current U.S. or non-U.S. passport
- Document proving date of birth
- Document proving signature
- Document proving Massachusetts residency

One of the documents, other than an SSN card or passport, must be a primary document.

See Appendix A, Acceptable Forms of Identification, for a list of acceptable primary and second-day identification documents

All identification documents **must be originals**. Photocopies will *not* be accepted. For a complete list of documents that are accepted for identification purposes and for rules on foreign language translations, see *Appendix A*.

For information on obtaining a SSN, call 1-800-772-1213.

Social Security and License Numbers

You must have a valid Social Security number (SSN) to apply for any permit, license, or ID, including a replacement or a renewal. When you submit an application at an RMV Branch, the Registry will attempt to validate the SSN you provide against computer records at the Social Security Administration (SSA). If you do not have an SSN, you may request an application for one by calling 1-800-772-1213. Note: If you have recently married and are changing your name, you should make the change with the Social Security Administration (SSA) before you change your name on your driver's license. This is to ensure that the SSA recognizes your new name when the RMV attempts to validate your SSN.

If you are not a citizen and do not have an SSN, you should apply for one at a Social Security Office as soon as possible. If you are denied an SSN, you may still qualify for a Massachusetts driver's license if you can meet other identification requirements proving your age, signature, and Massachusetts residency. However, to prove that you applied for an

SSN, you must present the written Denial Notice the SSA provided you, which informed you that you were not eligible for an SSN, and evidence of an acceptable visa code.

RMV May Reject SSN Denial Notice

The RMV reserves the right to reject any Social Security Denial Notice that does not appear to be genuine, or which appears to have been altered, or is incomplete, or that indicates the application for an SSN has not been properly completed.

The RMV can keep your SSN confidential by assigning you a random driver's license number.

A Denial Notice from the SSA which indicates that the applicant has failed to properly complete the application process will be treated by the RMV as an **unacceptable Denial Notice**. An application for a Learner's Permit, Driver's License or ID card that is accompanied by an unacceptable Denial Notice will be rejected. Evidence of failure to properly complete the SSN application process includes, but is not limited to, failing to provide documents required as part of the SSN application process, including failing to provide evidence of class admission, and failing to comply with a request by the SSA to visit an SSA office for an in-person interview.

You should notify your insurance company of any license number changes.

The RMV requires your SSN to confirm your identity and to maintain your license and driving records. In the past, your Massachusetts driver's license number was automatically your SSN unless you requested a random state number to be assigned.

"S" License Numbers

Because many customers want to and should keep their SSNs confidential, the RMV license system now automatically assigns a computer generated number, beginning with an "S," as a license number. However, you do have the right to choose your SSN as your license number and you can make this request when you submit your permit application, immediately before your license is issued, or at renewal. If you want to

keep your SSN as your license number when you renew, you must complete the renewal form at an RMV branch office. This transaction cannot be done online.

Avoid using SSN on your License

Be very careful in your choice. Using your SSN as your license number on a license document that contains other personal information could make you vulnerable to identity theft. You could be making it very easy for an identity thief who sees your license to use the information to apply for credit in your name. That could destroy any good credit rating you may have established and create serious credit problems for you in the future.

Don't set yourself up to be a victim of identity theft!

If your current Massachusetts license displays your SSN as the license identification number and you wish to use a state-assigned "S" license identification number instead, you may make the change at license renewal time without an extra charge. If you want to acquire a new license identification number immediately, you can visit any RMV Branch or License Express location to obtain a new license with the new number. However, you must pay a \$20 duplicate license fee if the number change is not made at renewal time.

Having More than One Identification Number

If you have more than one document from the RMV (for example, a Class D license and a separate Class M Motorcycle permit), the RMV does not require that they both have the same identification number. If you change your Class D license number from your SSN to a state assigned number because you often use the Class D license for identification purposes, it is acceptable to leave the SSN on the Class M permit (if that is the identification number you used on that document). When you get the Class M added to your license, you will have one license number which will be the state assigned number.

Vision Screening Requirements

Testing your vision is a necessary part of ensuring that you are capable of operating a motor vehicle safely. An RMV clerk will screen your vision when you apply for a learner's permit or driver's license. You will be screened for visual acuity, color vision, and peripheral vision. If you normally wear contact lenses or corrective lenses to see at a distance, then you must wear them during the vision screening examination.

Your vision must be at least 20/40 visual acuity in your better eye (corrected) and at least 120 degrees of horizontal peripheral vision (both eyes together) for a full license. If your corrected vision is between 20/50 and 20/70 in the better eye, you may be eligible for a daylight only license. If you fail the vision screening examination, decline to take the examination, or are unable to take the vision screening examination, you may submit an original RMV Vision Screening Certificate that your physician or optometrist, licensed in Massachusetts, has completed. The RMV may accept this Vision Screening Certificate in lieu of the vision screening examination to demonstrate compliance with the minimum vision standards to obtain a Massachusetts driver's license.

For information on other physical qualifications necessary to hold a Massachusetts driver's license or for more information regarding the voluntary reporting procedure, please call the Medical Affairs Branch at 617-351-9222.

The Vision Screening Certificate is available at any RMV Branch or License Express counter. You may also be able to download the certificate from the RMV's Web site or pick up a copy at many eye-care providers.

Driving Record Verification

Whenever you apply for or renew a permit or license, the RMV's licensing computer system checks your name, birth date, SSN, and any out-of-state driver's license numbers with the Problem Driver Pointer System (PDPS), which stores information about license suspensions and revocations for drivers in all 50 states. If your record matches PDPS, you will not be al-

lowed to continue the application process until all out-of-state suspensions or convictions are resolved.

Driver's Education Certification

The RMV requires drivers under age 18 to take professional driving lessons at a local high school or driving school. Professional driving instruction can help you become a more skillful, knowledgeable driver, and it can increase your chances of passing the Class D or Class M road test on your first try. Another benefit of learning to drive through a licensed school is the ability to use a school vehicle for your road test and a school instructor as your test sponsor.

To apply for a Class D or M driver's license when you are between 16½ and 18 years old, you *must* have a driver's education certificate from a licensed driving school or a high school program that is approved by the Registrar. The fact that you have fulfilled this requirement will be available on your RMV computer record at the time of your road test. For a Class D license, you must also have an additional 12 hours of driving with a parent or guardian.

If you recently moved to Massachusetts and had already completed a driver's education program in another state, you should mail an original of your out-of-state driver's education certificate; a \$15 check; and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address in the margin. Verification will be made with the state that originally issued your driver's education certificate. The RMV will send you a new driver's education certificate. Once you receive it, you may book your road test.

Professional driving schools in Massachusetts must be licensed and are monitored by the RMV. You can obtain information on driving instruction by contacting your local high school or by consulting your telephone directory.

If you doubt a driving school's credentials, ask to see a license certificate, which the RMV issues.

**Driver Education
Certificate
Department
Registry of Motor
Vehicles
P.O. Box 55889
Boston, MA
02205-5889**

Getting a Learner's Permit

You must be at least 16 years old to apply for a Class D or Class M learner's permit. A learner's permit gives you permission to drive while you practice your skills and prepare for your road test. A permit is valid for two years. To earn your permit, take the following steps:

1. Complete a learner's permit application and submit it to any full-service RMV Branch. Applications are available at all Branch and License Express sites, and on our website **www.mass.gov/rmv**. If you are under 18, you must have your parent or guardian sign your application.
2. Pay a \$30 written test fee, which covers the cost of your test.
3. If you apply for a learner's permit/ID and are **17 years of age or under**, you must present the following documents:
 - SSN card or valid, current U.S. or non-U.S. passport
 - One primary document proving date of birthIf you are **18 years of age or older**, you must present the following documents:
 - SSN card or valid, current U.S. or non-U.S. passport
 - Document proving date of birth
 - Document proving signature
 - Document proving Massachusetts residency

When applying for a permit, you may wish to prepay the cost of your license. If fees have been prepaid, your driver's license will be automatically generated once you pass the road test.

One of the documents, other than an SSN card or passport, must be a primary document.

See Appendix A, Acceptable Forms of Identification, for a list of acceptable primary and second-day identification documents

You must also present a Social Security Number that validates with the Social Security Administration or an acceptable written Denial Notice from the Social Security Administration and evidence of an acceptable visa code. If you present any document that is inconsistent with the

concept of your being a resident of Massachusetts (such as B1 or B2 or other short term visa status, or an expired visa status or documents showing an out-of-state residence), you will not be considered a resident and an application for a Permit, License or Mass ID will be denied.

Note: You must present all of these documents **every time** you take the written test.

4. Pass a vision test at the RMV Branch or submit a RMV vision screening certificate from your medical practitioner.
5. Have your photo-image and signature captured electronically.
6. Pass a written test based on information in this manual.

You must carry your learner's permit whenever you drive until you earn a Junior Operator's License or a full driver's license.



Your Class D learner's permit allows you to drive with the following limitations:

- You must be accompanied by a licensed operator who occupies the passenger seat next to you and is at least 21 years old, holds a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or another state, and has at least 1 year of driving experience.
- If you are under 18, you may not drive between 12:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who is a validly licensed operator with at least 1 year of driving experience.



A Class M learner's permit allows you to operate a motorcycle with these limitations:

- You may *not* carry a passenger.
- You can drive *only* during daylight hours (between sunrise and sunset).
- You must wear a US DOT standard helmet.
- You must wear eyeglasses, goggles, or a protective face shield unless the motorcycle you are driving has a windshield or screen.

The RMV now has a new Motorcycle Manual! This manual focuses exclusively on motorcycles and is available in all RMV branches and online at mass.gov/rmv. Check it out for all the information you need to get a motorcycle license and to be a safe rider.

For more information on motorcycle rider courses for both beginner and experienced drivers, call 413-781-0633 or visit www.mass.gov/rmv.

With a Class D or Class M learner's permit, you may operate motor vehicles in another state as long as doing so does not violate that state's laws.

Written Test Procedures

The learner's permit written examination tests your understanding of Massachusetts motor vehicle laws and safe driving practices. This manual covers all the rules you must know to pass your written test. Each test has 20 multiple-choice questions. To pass the test, you must answer 14 questions correctly within the allotted time of 20 minutes.

You must study the contents of this manual to be able to pass the written test.

Written examinations are offered *only* on a walk-in basis when you submit your application for a learner's permit. You cannot schedule your written test in advance.

Each full-service RMV Branch has an automated testing station (ATS), which is an easy-to-use videoscreen kiosk that uses a computer program to deliver test questions visually. The ATS examination is available in both English and Spanish (for a Class D or M permit). You have about 1 minute to answer each question. The ATS lets you practice with sample questions before beginning the actual test. You can choose to take the test using headphones. When you take the test using headphones, you can hear the questions as well as see them on the videoscreen.

Once the test starts, you may only skip a question once. When you skip a question twice, the ATS automatically registers an incorrect answer. If you are caught cheating on an ATS or a written test, you will immediately receive a failing score. In addition, you will be banned from holding any learner's permit or driver's license for 60 days.

Foreign Language Tests

If English is not your primary language, you may ask to take the written test in a foreign language. The RMV currently offers Class D written examinations in a variety of languages (see list to the right). Class M written examinations are avail-

Class D Learner's Permit written tests are available in the following languages:

Albanian
Arabic
Armenian
Cambodian
Chinese
Czechoslovakian
English
Farsi (Iranian)
Finnish
French
German
Greek
Hebrew
Hungarian
Italian
Japanese
Korean
Laotian
Polish
Portuguese
Romanian
Russian
Spanish
Turkish
Vietnamese

able in English and Spanish. Class A, B, and C written examinations are only available in English. As was stated previously, the ATS test is only available in English and Spanish.

Simplified English, Oral, and Hearing Impaired Examinations

For customers who cannot take the standard written test due to reading or hearing difficulties, the RMV offers special examinations by appointment. A simplified English or oral examination (headphone) may be arranged for situations involving...

- Dyslexia or other learning disabilities
- Hearing impairment, when a sign language interpreter is required

You can ask for and schedule a special written test with any RMV Branch supervisor. You may be asked to submit official medical documentation to support your request. To arrange for an oral examination requiring a sign language interpreter, you must submit to the branch manager a letter explaining your condition from a licensed physician or the Massachusetts Office of Deafness.

Taking the Road Test

The next step toward earning your Massachusetts driver's license is taking a road test with an RMV examiner. Whether you are applying for your first license or completing a license conversion that requires a road test, you must have a learner's permit to schedule a test. Road test procedures are described in the following pages.

Currently, you can opt to pay the written test, road test, and license fees when you take the written exam. If you choose not to pay all the fees at the same time, you can pay the remaining fees when you book your road test.

If you are obtaining a motorcycle license, or adding a motorcycle class (Class M) endorsement to your Massachusetts driver's license, you do *not* have to take a road test if you have suc-

successfully completed the Motorcycle Rider Education Program (MREP), approved by the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

For a Class D license, you are not allowed to attempt more than six road tests in a 12-month period. (Class M see page 27).

Scheduling a Road Test

Road tests are scheduled by telephone. To schedule a road test, call the . . .

**RMV Automated Service Line at
866-MASSRMV (866-627-7768)**

You may cancel or reschedule your road test at no additional fee if you call the RMV Phone Center and give more than 24 hours' notice.

You *must* be on time for your road test, because road tests are scheduled closely. If you are late for your appointment, you will *not* be tested and you will be required to pay the road test fee.

Being Prepared for the Road Test

On the day you take your Class D road test, you must fulfill several requirements:



1. Have a completed road test application, and have your parent or guardian complete the parental consent section if you are under age 18.

In completing the application for the road test, you will be required to disclose whether you have a physical, mental or medical condition or are taking any medications that might affect your ability to operate a motor vehicle. If you do, prior to taking a road test, you will be required to submit medical clearance, from your physician, to a Branch manager.

A Branch manager will review your application and either approve it or forward it to the Medical Affairs Branch for appropriate review.

2. Have your learner's permit

3. Bring a qualified sponsor (see *the Sponsor Requirements section*)
4. Provide an acceptable vehicle to use in your test (see *the Vehicle Requirements section*)

If you are between 16½ and 18 years old, you must have a driver's education certificate before you can schedule a road test. As part of the road test application, your parent or guardian must certify, in writing, that you have also completed 12 hours of driving supervised by a licensed driver aged 21 or over. If you are under 18, your parent or legal guardian must sign the front of your license application.

If you are under age 18, you must maintain a clean driving record for the 6 consecutive months immediately preceding the date you apply for the test. You will not be able to take the test if you...

- **Have experienced any surchargeable incidents (e.g., at-fault accidents, moving violations) under Massachusetts law or the law of another state**
- **Have had your permit suspended for committing drug- or alcohol-related motor vehicle violations**
- **Have been convicted for violating any drug- or alcohol-related laws in Massachusetts or another state**

(Note: Even if you had a clean driving record for 6 consecutive months immediately preceding the date you first booked the road test, if the RMV receives notice of an event between the date the test was booked and the date of the test itself that would cause the 6 month clean driving period to be interrupted, you will not be allowed to take the road test when scheduled. A new clean driving record of at least 6 months will have to be established, unless you reach 18 years old prior to that time).



For a Class M road test, you *must* bring your learner's permit and a completed license application form, but you are *not* required to bring a sponsor.

Sponsor Requirements

For a Class D license, including a JOL, you need a sponsor for your road test, even if you have a valid foreign driver's license. When you arrive at the test location, you *must* be accompanied by a licensed operator who...

- Is at least 21 years old
- Has had at least 1 year of driving experience
- Has a valid driver's license issued by his or her home state. Holders of foreign driver's licenses are *not* eligible to be sponsors.

If you are not accompanied by a sponsor, you will *not* be given a Class D road test.

Vehicle Requirements

For all road tests, you must supply a properly equipped, legally registered vehicle.

Passenger Vehicles

In general, the vehicle you use for your Class D road test should be safe, in good working order, and have a valid registration certificate and inspection sticker. Your test will be canceled if the examiner believes your vehicle is unsafe. In addition to being safe, your vehicle must have these features:

- Adequate seating so that the examiner may sit next to you and your sponsor may sit in the rear. You may not use a vehicle that does not have a seat for your sponsor. Sponsors may *not* sit in the bed of a two-passenger pickup truck.
- An accessible foot brake or an emergency hand brake so the examiner can make an emergency stop. It is up to the individual examiner to determine if the foot brake or emergency hand brake would be accessible to him or her in an emergency. To help ensure that brake access will not be a problem, you should bring a vehicle to the exam

The RMV now has a new Motorcycle Manual! This manual focuses exclusively on motorcycles and is available in all RMV branches and online at mass.gov/rmv. Check it out for all the information you need to get a motorcycle license and to be a safe rider.



To be acceptable to the examiner, the vehicle you bring to the road test *must* meet all the requirements in this section.

In some larger vehicles, like certain minivans, the service brake is too far from the examiner to be easily accessible in an emergency. These vehicles are *not* suitable for road tests and may be rejected by the examiner.

that either has a bench seat with easy access to the foot brakes from the passenger seat, or has a centrally located emergency hand brake. If you are prevented from taking the road exam **solely** because the examiner determined that he/she could not access the braking system, you will not be charged a fee for that scheduled exam. Driving instruction vehicles must have a second foot brake for instructors or examiners.

If your test vehicle is registered out of state, you must show the examiner proof of insurance coverage equal to Massachusetts' minimum limits, which are \$20,000/\$40,000 for bodily injury and \$5,000 for property damage.

A policy or a certificate that lists coverage limits serves as proof of a vehicle's insurance.

If you are renting the vehicle you are using for your road test, you must show your examiner your rental agreement and a letter from the rental company, on its letterhead, that authorizes you to use the vehicle for a driver's license road test. You are not required to provide this information for leased vehicles.

Road Tests Limited for Vehicles with General Registration Plates

You cannot take a road test in a passenger vehicle that is registered with a "Dealer" plate unless you can prove, to the satisfaction of the Examiner, that you are the dealer, or spouse of the dealer, or a salesperson who works at the dealership for at least 20 hours per week. You will not be allowed to take a road test in a vehicle with a Repair Plate. A vehicle with a Farm Plate can be used, if acceptable to the Examiner, but only if the applicant can prove, to the satisfaction of the Examiner, that the applicant is a member of the family or an employee of the farmer. The vehicle cannot be a passenger vehicle, but may be a pickup truck if there is an acceptable rear seat for a sponsor.

Passenger Vehicle Test Procedures



You should arrive at least 15 minutes early for your scheduled road test appointment. You will not be able to take your test if you are late.

Before your road test, the RMV examiner will inspect your vehicle to ensure that it is properly registered, that all equipment is in good working order, and that the motor vehicle provides a safe, adequate, and clean seat for the examiner and easy access to the brake.

After the examiner inspects and approves the vehicle, the driving test will begin. Only you, the examiner, and your sponsor are allowed in the vehicle during the exam. The examiner will sit in the seat next to you; your sponsor must sit in the rear. No children or pets are allowed. If the examiner so authorizes, a language interpreter may also be allowed in the vehicle.

You and your sponsor are not allowed to converse unless authorized by the examiner. The examiner's goal is to observe your driving performance. Road tests may vary, but you should be prepared to demonstrate your ability to...

- Use hand signals
- Start the engine
- Start and stop the vehicle
- Parallel Park
- Back the vehicle approximately 50 feet
- Make left - right turns
- Start, stop, and turn the vehicle on a hill
- Turn around between curbs
- Enter and leave intersections
- Recognize and obey traffic signs, lights and signals, and other rules of the road
- Use good driving rules

In addition to judging your overall driving skills, the examiner will note how well you follow general good-driving procedures, including whether you...

- Use good driving posture, with both hands always placed properly on the wheel
- Drive in the proper traffic lane and look carefully and signal properly before changing lanes
- Maintain enough distance between your vehicle and the one ahead of you
- Always drive at safe speeds to comply with speed limits and varying traffic conditions
- Yield the right-of-way correctly
- Are generally aware of your actions and particularly those of other drivers



Motorcycles

In general, the motorcycle you use for your Class M road test should be safe and in good working order. Your test will be canceled if the examiner believes your motorcycle is unsafe.

In addition, you must show the examiner...

- Your motorcycle's registration document
- A valid inspection sticker

If your motorcycle is registered out of state, you will have to show the examiner proof of insurance coverage equal to Massachusetts' minimum limits, which are \$20,000/\$40,000 for bodily injury and \$5,000 for property damage.

A policy or a certificate that lists limits of coverage serves as proof of the vehicle's insurance.

As a motorcycle operator, you must also...

- Wear a helmet that meets or exceeds US DOT standards

State law requires your helmet to comply with the US DOT's Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 218.

Helmets that meet this standard will be labeled with stickers on the inside and outside.

- Wear eyeglasses, goggles, or a protective face shield, unless your motorcycle has a windshield or a screen

For information on motorcycle rider courses for both beginner and experienced drivers, call the RMV at 413-781-0633

The RMV now has a new **Motorcycle Manual**! This manual focuses exclusively on motorcycles and is available in all RMV branches and online at mass.gov/rmv. Check it out for all the information you need to get a motorcycle license and to be a safe rider.



Road Test Waiver Available: The RMV road test for a Class M motorcycle license or endorsement may be waived if you can prove that you have successfully completed a course of motorcycle instruction known as the Massachusetts Rider Education Program (MREP) as approved by the RMV.

You should arrive at least 15 minutes early for your scheduled motorcycle road test appointment. You will not be able to take your test if you are late.

Before your road test, the RMV examiner will inspect your motorcycle to ensure that it is registered, inspected, and insured properly and that all equipment is in good working order.

As a pre-road test, the examiner will assess your knowledge of motorcycle equipment and controls. For the road test, the examiner will observe your ability to operate a motorcycle. Your road test will consist of some or all of the following riding skills:

- “Figure eights” and 360° circles in both directions without your feet touching the road
- Normal starts and stops
- Driving in traffic
- Crossing intersections
- Making turns
- Riding up and down hills

If you fail two motorcycle road tests for a Class M license, you must enroll in and successfully complete a beginner rider course before you can schedule another test.

If you take a Class M road test on a three-wheeled motorcycle with a sidecar, you will be limited to operating such a vehicle.

Common Reasons for Failing a Road Test

- You were at fault in an accident with another motor vehicle, pedestrian, or object.
- You were driving in a way that may have caused an accident or in a way the examiner considered dangerous.
- You violated a motor vehicle law, rule, or regulation.
- You demonstrated a lack of experience safely operating a motor vehicle.
- You refused to follow the examiner's instructions or drove contrary to the examiner's instructions.

Policies on Cancellations and Fees

Whenever a public school system cancels classes for weather-related reasons, road tests scheduled in the school system's community will be canceled *automatically* for the entire day. Road tests will also be canceled automatically when the Governor declares a state of emergency. If the Governor declares an emergency in a particular region, only road tests in that region will be canceled.

RMV examiners also may cancel road tests when weather conditions are considered unsafe. To determine if your road test has been canceled, please call the RMV's Phone Center. In any of the preceding cases, you may schedule a new road test at no additional fee. However, you *will* be charged the road test fee if you...

- Fail the test
- Are unprepared for the test
- Are refused the test because your vehicle fails to pass the examiner's inspection
- Do not bring a qualified sponsor
- Fail to appear for or are late for your test
- Cancel or reschedule your test less than 24 hours before your scheduled test time

Your New License

If you pass the road test and **you have prepaid** for your license, the examiner will stamp the back of your learner's permit and it will become a temporary license, valid up to 30 days. The RMV will manufacture your new, permanent photo-image license and mail it to you.



If you pass the road test and **you have not prepaid** for your license, you must take the permit with the road test results indicated on the back, to an RMV branch **within 30 days**. You must then pay for and obtain a temporary license while your permanent license is being manufactured. (Note: If you do not obtain a temporary license within 30 days of passing your road test, you may be **required to retake** the road test at your expense.)

If your permanent license does not arrive in the mail within 4 weeks of issuance of your temporary license, please call the RMV Phone Center at 617-351-4500 (from the 339/617/781/857 area codes) or 1-800-858-3926 (from the 413/508/978 area codes).

Whenever you operate a motor vehicle in Massachusetts, the law requires you to carry a valid driver's license on your person or within easy reach inside your vehicle.

Junior Operator's License

If you are 18 or younger when you receive your license, the permanent license that will be mailed to you will be identified as a "Junior Operator's License (JOL)." As indicated earlier, as a Junior Operator you will be subject to certain restrictions and to certain penalties for violating those restrictions.

- You may not operate a motor vehicle within the first 6 months after receiving your JOL while any person **under age 18** is in the vehicle (other than you or an immediate family member), unless you are accompanied by a person who is at least 21 years old, has at least 1 year of driving experience, holds a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or another state, and is occupying a seat beside you.



General Rule: The passenger restriction that applies to you as a JOL holder under age 18 is lifted once you complete the 6-month period (or the portion that applies to you) **or** you reach age 18, whichever occurs first.

If you violate the passenger restriction, you will be subject to a license suspension of 30 days for a first offense, 60 days for a second offense, and 90 days for a third or subsequent offense. The law requires the Registrar to impose this suspension in addition to any other penalty, fine, suspension, revocation, or requirement that may be imposed in connection with a violation committed at the time you were violating the passenger restriction. The suspension for violating the passenger restriction will not begin to run until any other suspension has been completed.

The 6-month passenger restriction period will stop running, temporarily, during any suspension. When your JOL is reinstated, you will still have to complete the remainder of the 6-month restriction period that existed at the beginning of the suspension period, unless you have already turned 18.

- As the holder of a JOL, you may not operate a motor vehicle between 12:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless you are accompanied by one of your parents or your legal guardian. If you are found operating a motor vehicle in violation of this restriction, you may be charged with operating a motor vehicle without being licensed; this is a criminal violation.



Note: The law states that between the hours of 12:00 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. and between 4:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m., the provisions of the law shall be enforced by law enforcement agencies only when a junior operator of a motor vehicle has been lawfully stopped for a violation of the motor vehicle laws or some other offense. This is called "secondary enforcement." However, it is still illegal for you to operate during those times without a parent present in the car.

- You may not operate a motor vehicle that requires a **commercial driver's license** (CDL).
- You will be suspended for 1 year if you are under 18 when you have committed certain driving offenses and alcohol or drugs were involved (180 days if age 18 to 21), **in addition to any penalty assessed by a court or other law.** (*For details, see the License Suspension or Revocation section of Chapter 2.*)
- You will be ineligible for a full license until you have completed the period of suspension imposed while operating with a JOL and you reach age 18.
- You will face additional suspension periods of up to 1 year for a second or third offense involving speeding or drag racing violations.

Policies for New Residents

To retain driving privileges, out-of-state or foreign-licensed drivers *must* obtain Massachusetts driver's licenses upon becoming Massachusetts residents. If you currently carry a valid license from another state, a U.S. territory, Canada, or Mexico, you may be eligible to submit your license for conversion. If your license does not contain a photo, you may be required to provide additional documentation.

Note: If you present any document that is inconsistent with the concept of your being a resident of Massachusetts (such as B1 or B2 or other short term visa status, or an expired visa status

or documents showing an out-of-state residence), you will not be considered a resident and an application for a Permit, License or Mass ID will be denied. You may be eligible for a liquor ID.

The table on the following page summarizes the requirements for license conversion. License conversions require that you pay all application, testing, and license fees, regardless of whether you must take an exam. In most cases, if you hold a license from most foreign countries, you will need to pass both the written and the road tests.

For any of these categories, you must supply proof of Massachusetts residency.

Driving records must be no more than 30 days old.

Requirements for New Residents				
Place of Issue	License Status	Written Test	Road Test	Driving Record
Out-of-State	Valid or expired less than 1 year			
	Expired more than 1 year but less than 4 years	✓		
	Expired more than 4 years	✓	✓	
14 U.S. Territories, Canada, or Mexico	Valid or expired less than 1 year			✓
	Expired more than 1 year but less than 4 years	✓		✓
	Expired more than 4 years	✓	✓	✓
Other Foreign Countries	Valid license (with English translation if needed)	✓	✓	

Out-of-State Conversions

If you have an out-of-state license that is current or has been expired for less than a year, you can exchange it for a Massachusetts license if you provide the following identification...

- Social Security Card or Valid, Current U.S. or Non-U.S. passport
- Document proving date of birth
- Document proving signature
- Document proving Massachusetts residency
- Out-of-state license

If your out-of-state license does not have a photo you must also provide an acceptable photo ID from the list of primary and secondary documents (see Appendix A).

The out-of-state license can be presented as one of the ID documents to confirm date of birth **OR** signature. It cannot be used to confirm both. (See Appendix A for information on acceptable forms of ID.)

You must present a valid social security number that verifies with the Social Security Administration or an acceptable written denial notice from the Social Security Administration. If you provide a written denial notice, you will also be required to provide evidence of an acceptable visa status.

You also must have a cleared background check with the Problem Driver Pointer System (PDPS). (See page 35 - *Driving Record Check on Renewal*)

You cannot have a physical disability that might limit your ability to operate a motor vehicle properly.

If you are between 16½ and 18 years old, you must have a Massachusetts driver's education certificate and logged an additional 12 hours of driving supervised by a parent or legal guardian.

Junior Operator (16-18 years old) License Conversion

License Conversion for a Junior Operator requires that you provide a certified copy of your driving record from the state you are leaving.

You will be subject to all of the provisions of the Massachusetts JOL law. *See the Graduated License Law/JOL section for more information.*

The only exception is the period of time you will be subject to the passenger restriction, which depends on your driving record. If your record

All applicants who convert a license from another jurisdiction must surrender that license in order to receive a Massachusetts license.

indicates you have had a valid license for a full 6 months, without suspension or revocation, you will not be subject to the passenger restriction.

Permit Conversion

Class D and M Learner's Permits may be converted to an equivalent Massachusetts permit.

All applicants who convert a license from another jurisdiction must surrender that license in order to receive a Massachusetts license.

To convert your out-of-state permit, you must present your out-of-state permit, your Social Security Card **OR** Valid, Current U.S. or Non-U.S. Passport, a document proving Massachusetts residency, and a certified copy of a driving record (not more than 30 days old) from the state of issuance.

If you are under 18 years old, your parent must sign the permit application but you do not have to provide proof of Massachusetts residency. You will not be required to take the written test; however, you will need to pay the applicable fee. A converted permit will be dated to reflect the issue date of the original permit in order to meet the six month experience requirement for applicants under 18. The Massachusetts permit will expire two years from the adjusted issue date.

The 14 US territories consist of the following:

American Samoa
Baker Island
Guam
Howland Island
Jarvis Island
Johnston Atoll
Kingman Reef
Midway Islands
Navassa Island
Northern Mariana Islands
Palmyra Atoll
Puerto Rico
US Virgin Islands
Wake Islands

Source - The World-fact Book (US CIA-2004)

Conversions from a U.S. Territory, Canada, or Mexico

When converting a license from one of the 14 U.S. territories, Canada, or Mexico, the out-of-state conversion policies apply (see *the Out-of-State Conversions section preceding*). The only additional requirement is that you submit an original certified driving record from your home territory or country. Driving records must be no more than 30 days old. An original certified driving record is required from the 14 U.S. Territories, Canada, and Mexico because the driving records of those jurisdictions are not available for electronic review by the RMV through the National Driver Register.

Other Foreign Licenses

If you hold a driver's license from any country other than the United States, a U.S. Territory, Canada, or Mexico, you must take both the writ-

ten test and road test. While you may drive in the United States with your valid foreign license from one of the countries listed in Appendix C of this manual for up to 1 year from the date you entered the country as a visitor, you must still apply for a Massachusetts license when you establish residency in the Commonwealth.

Many motor vehicle agencies around the country, including Massachusetts, are reviewing their rules for converting licenses from other countries, so there may be changes in this area. If you have a question about converting a foreign license, you should call the RMV Phone Center.

The United Nations Road Traffic Convention of 1949 and the Inter-American Automotive Traffic Convention of 1943 extend the 1-year driving privilege to all member countries (*see Appendix C for a complete list of participating nations*).

License Renewals and Replacements

Renewals

Although the RMV mails license renewal forms, you are obligated to renew your driver's license before the expiration date and to inform the RMV and the U.S. Post Office of any address change. As a license holder, you are solely responsible for its safekeeping, renewal, and replacement.

Your Massachusetts driver's license is valid for 5 years unless it is your first license, which expires on your fifth birthday after the date of issue. You may renew your license up to 1 year before the expiration date. **If your license expired more than 4 years ago, you may be required to take a written test and road test.**

To renew your driver's license, visit any RMV Branch or Limited Service Branch (*see Appendix F for locations and business hours*). Each time you renew, you will have to pass a vision screening test, supply your SSN or current Social Security Denial Letter, and pay the renewal fee.

Please note that at Limited Service Branches (as opposed to full-service Branch locations),

RMV Phone Center
617-351-4500
in the 339/617/781/857
area codes

1-800-858-3926
from all other MA
area codes

Monday—Friday
9 a.m.—5 p.m.

Internet Address
www.mass.gov/rmv

you can pay your renewal fee by check or credit card *only*.

Eligible customers may also renew their licenses online. Visit www.mass.gov/rmv for more information.

Driving Record Check on Renewal

Approximately 2 months prior to your license expiration date, the RMV will run a check of your license status in other jurisdictions. The RMV will run a computer check of your name, birth date, and SSN with the Problem Driver Pointer System (PDPS), which stores information on license and right-to-operate suspensions and revocations for drivers in all 50 states. (The system is operated by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration -NHTSA). If you are identified as a suspended or revoked driver in that system, you will not be allowed to renew your license until the matter is resolved. You will be notified by letter of your non-renewal status.

SSN Verification on Renewal

Approximately 6 months prior to your license expiration date, the RMV will attempt to confirm your Social Security Number with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The RMV will run a computer check through the SSA to ensure that the SSN you provided to the RMV is the number that has been issued to you. If we are told it is not, you will receive a letter from the RMV informing you that license renewal is not possible until you resolve the SSN problem with the SSA.

If you have outstanding parking tickets, unpaid excise taxes, outstanding warrants, unpaid child support, outstanding Fast Lane violations, abandoned vehicles or a suspended or revoked license, you will *not* be able to renew your license. The RMV will notify you by letter if you are not eligible for license renewal due to any of these problems. For detailed information on reasons for nonrenewal, see *Chapter 2, Keeping Your License*.

Duplicates

To apply for a duplicate of your photo-image license, simply log on to www.mass.gov/rmv or call the RMV's Phone Center, request a duplicate, and pay the \$20 duplicate fee by VISA, MasterCard or Discover. Alternatively, you can visit an RMV Branch.

Temporary Replacements

If you are temporarily out of Massachusetts and cannot return home before your driver's license expires, you may ask the RMV to issue you a temporary "pink" license. A temporary license is valid for a maximum of 120 days after the expiration date of your original license, and this extension can be granted only once. To request a temporary replacement license, call the RMV Phone Center or write to the RMV's main office at the address listed in the margin. In any correspondence, be sure to include your name, license number and out-of-state address.

Voluntary Surrender

If you become unqualified to operate a motor vehicle safely due to a physical or mental condition or simply wish to cease driving for other reasons, you may voluntarily surrender your license to the RMV. You may voluntarily surrender your license at any full service RMV branch during normal business hours or by mailing the license to the Medical Affairs Branch of the RMV.

A voluntary surrender of license does not have the negative insurance ramifications that a suspension or revocation of license has and involves no fee. In addition, upon surrender, the RMV will issue you a Massachusetts Identification Card at no fee. If, at any point thereafter, you wish to resume driving, the RMV may re-issue your license upon receipt of appropriate medical documentation. In appropriate circumstances, a competency road examination may be required prior to re-issuance of a license. A re-issuance of license which was voluntarily surren-

**Customer Assistance
Bureau
Registry of Motor
Vehicles
P.O. Box 55889
Boston, MA
02205-5889**

**Medical Affairs Branch
Registry of Motor
Vehicles
P.O. Box 55889
Boston, MA 02205-5889**

dered involves no fee unless your license passed its normal renewal date during the time in which it was surrendered. In this case, the fee for reissuance of a license would be the normal renewal fee.

Change of Address / Name

If you hold a Massachusetts learner's permit or driver's license, the law requires you to notify the RMV in writing of any address change within 30 days of the change. Go to the RMV website or call the RMV Phone Center and give your new address. You should also notify the U.S. Post Office of any address change within 30 days of making the change.

When you give the RMV your new address, you can add a sticker to the back of your driver's license to reflect the change or pay \$20 to obtain a new license with your new address.

If you change your name, you must report the change promptly to the RMV so that it can update all your license and vehicle records. Also, you must obtain a new driver's license bearing your new name and signature. This transaction costs \$20 and must be done in person at a branch office.

You should notify the Social Security Administration any time you change your name.

Voter Registration

If you are legally eligible to vote, you can now register when you conduct a permit or license transaction at a RMV Branch or License Express location. All licensing transaction forms contain a section in which you can indicate if you wish to register to vote or update your current voter registration.

You can choose to register with a political party or with one of the political designations on file at the State Elections Office. If you do not want to register with a particular political group, you can select "UNENROLLED" status. If you register or change your affiliation, your information will be forwarded first to the Secretary of State's Central

You must be a U.S. citizen and at least 18 years old at the time of the next election to register to vote.

For more information on registering to vote or the election process, call the State Election Line at 1-800-462-VOTE.

Voter Registry and then to your local election office, which will send you a confirmation notice in the mail.

Organ Donor Program

When you receive your license in the mail, you will have the opportunity to decide whether to donate your organs and tissues upon your death. In the envelope containing your license, you will find information and a donor card. If after reading the information you choose to become a donor, sign the donor card in the presence of two witnesses, who may also sign the card (family members are recommended witnesses).

The most important step in this process is sharing your decision with your family. Most people do not realize that next of kin will be asked for their consent even if a donor has a signed donor card. If you would like to donate but do not want to sign a donor card or have this designation listed on your license, simply tell your family members of your decision. If you change your mind and no longer want to be an organ donor, simply destroy your donor card and inform your family.

If your current driver's license does not show you are an organ donor, you may complete the organ donor card at any time. You can also change your donor designation anytime you apply for or renew a license. Adding a donor designation must be done at a branch. It cannot be added if you renew your license over the Internet.

If you are in active military service and want to drive in Massachusetts, you must have a valid driver's license from your home state. If you are a permanent resident of the Commonwealth, you must have a valid Massachusetts license. Following are exceptions to this rule:

For more information on organ donation, call:

New England Organ Bank: 1-800-446-6362

NorthEast Organ Procurement Organization and Tissue Bank: 1-800-874-5215

Lions Club: Lazarus Project 1117 Main St. Reading, MA 01867

Licensing Rules for Military Personnel

- If you are returning from active duty outside the United States and have a driver's license issued by a branch of the Armed Forces

You are not required to renew your Massachusetts license while you are in active military service.

**Office of the
Ombudsman
Registry of Motor
Vehicles
P.O. Box 55889
Boston, MA 02205-5889**

based in another country, you may drive with that license in Massachusetts for up to 45 days.

- If you have a Massachusetts driver's license that expired during your active service, you may use that license to operate a motor vehicle for up to 60 days after your honorable discharge from military service. If you choose to exercise this option, you *must* carry your expired license and proof of your discharge with you when you drive.

Renewals and Replacements for Military Personnel

Military personnel are *not* required to renew their Massachusetts driver's licenses during active service. However, you may wish to renew your license during your military service. In such cases, the RMV will issue a photo license or a special nonphoto driver's license, depending upon the circumstances, if you are stationed outside Massachusetts.

You can only request a nonphoto driver's license by mail. To order a nonphoto license renewal, for military personnel and their dependents, mail your request, the renewal fee (see the License Fees section preceding), and a copy of your military ID to the address in the margin. A nonphoto driver's license will be mailed to you as long as you are located outside Massachusetts. In any correspondence, be sure to include your out-of-state address.

Active members of the Armed Forces and their dependents who wish to obtain duplicates of their licenses can simply send letters of request stating whether their licenses were lost or stolen to the address in the margin and include copies of their military IDs.

For military personnel and their dependents, duplicate licenses are free.